

As we turn toward a new year, I think back on 2011, a year that saw many significant events, from the low moments like the tragic shooting rampage that targeted my colleague, Rep. Gabby Giffords, to the high moments, such as the news that Osama Bin Laden would never again cause the death of another person. This year has certainly had its share of frustrations and successes in Washington, as well. However, each new year brings renewed hope that we can continue to enjoy those same freedoms that we currently enjoy, and that we can change those things that need to be improved.

This past year, I have focused on shifting Washington toward a climate of fiscal responsibility, and at every opportunity I have supported efforts to cut spending, cap future spending, and to introduce a balanced budget amendment. However, I believe there is still a great amount of work to be done. All year, I have heard from folks in Virginia's First District who are focused on ensuring that their government spends their hard earned tax dollars responsibly. I agree, and I will continue fighting for increased transparency in government spending, as well as eliminating wasteful expenditures and bringing greater accountability to the budgetary process.

I am also hopeful that several bills I have introduced this year will be considered and passed by the House of Representatives in 2012. One, H.R. 2173, would allow us to streamline the process to approve temporary infrastructure to test and develop offshore wind power along our coastlines. I believe this could be a significant step in harnessing sources of alternative energy, thereby decreasing our reliance on foreign energy sources. Another, H.R. 258 (the Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act), would implement improved management and budgeting techniques to enhance accountability, coordination, flexibility and efficiency of Bay restoration efforts. Restoration of the Chesapeake Bay is a priority to me, and I will continue to work to ensure that all partners are doing their part to protect and restore this critical natural resource for now and future generations. These, and many other bills I support, are commonsense pieces of legislation that can help folks in the First District of Virginia and across our Commonwealth.

It is also important at this time of year to keep in mind those who make sacrifices each and every day for our freedom: the men and women of our Armed Forces and their families. These dedicated citizens show extraordinary bravery and selflessness in their daily lives so that we can continue to enjoy the freedoms we hold so dear. This day and every day, I hope that we can keep these folks in our thoughts and prayers.

As we continue into this New Year, I hope you will continue to keep in touch with me as we

strive to foster an environment of job creation and economic prosperity in the United States. My office and I are always available to answer questions about the effects of legislation on your small business, to provide assistance in dealing with federal government organizations, and to answer your questions and hear your concerns about your government. If I can help you or your family in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (202) 225-4261, through my website (www.wittman.house.gov), on Facebook (www.facebook.com/RepRobWittman), or on Twitter (www.twitter.com/RobWittman).

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

#